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COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS.

LABOUR TURNOVER, MARCH, 1956

This report gives the results of a survey of labour turnover in Australian industry in the month of March, 1956, and compares these results with those obtained in similar surveys covering the months of March, 1949 to 1955.

Labour turnover is generally measured by the number of engagements or separations expressed as a percentage of average employment during the period under review. Table 1 below shows figures of both engagements and separations expressed in this way. "Separations" include dismissals and retrenchments as well as numbers of persons who leave of their own volition and a dissection of separations into these classes is given in Table 3.

The period covered in individual returns is not uniform, depending as it does on the dates on which pay-roll tax returns of individual businesses are made up in February and March in each year. The figures should be interpreted as applying to an average of about four and a half weeks. The trends in labour turnover are most clearly shown by comparing successive turnover rates for the same month of each year so as to avoid the effect of seasonal fluctuation. Labour turnover rates are influenced by the seasonal nature of employment particularly in the food, drink and tobacco industry and, to a lesser degree, in other industries.

Industrial Coverage

The surveys are based on a sample within certain industries of businesses subject to Pay-roll Tax. They exclude businesses whose pay-roll is below the taxable limit, as well as religious, benevolent and other similar organizations which are exempt from Pay-roll Tax. In addition, the surveys exclude rural industry, private domestic service, the professions (e.g., accountancy firms, trade associations consultant engineers, etc.) the shipping and stevedoring industry, the motion picture industry and all government employment and semi-government undertakings other than banks and airlines.

Some indication of the extent of the field surveyed is given by the fact that the figures relate to private businesses employing approximately 80 per cent. of the total number of employees in private employment.

Engagements and Separations

The trends in March labour turnover rates from 1949 to 1956 (excepting 1951 and 1954 when no surveys of labour turnover for the month of March were conducted) are shown in Table 1.

Broadly the figures show in 1952 and 1953 a decline from the 1950 level in both engagement and separation rates followed by higher rates in 1955 and 1956. A number of rates in March, 1956 have fallen below the rates for March, 1955, but for all rates other than those for engagements of female manual workers in manufacturing industries, the rates were higher in March, 1956 than they were in 1953.

Comparing March 1956 with March 1955 rates, engagements fell in all categories of manufacturing industries and for male manual workers and female "other workers" in the non-manufacturing industries. The sharpest fall in engagement rates was for male manual workers in non-manufacturing industries in which the rate fell from the previous high peak of 9.2 to a rate of 7.0.

Separation rates in March, 1956 for male manual workers were below the March, 1955 rate, while for male "other workers" they were higher than in any previous survey. Separation rates for female workers have moved between these dates in opposite directions to the male rates; for manual workers they are higher, and for "other workers" they are lower, than they were in March, 1955.

TABLE 1 : ENGAGEMENTS AND SEPARATIONS : 1949 TO 1956
(Percentage of average number of employees in each Group)

Period	Manufacturing		Non-Manufacturing (a)		All Industries (a)	
	Manual Workers	Other Workers	Manual Workers	Other Workers	Manual Workers	Other Workers
MALES						
<u>Engagements</u>						
March, 1949	9.3	1.8	8.1	3.5	8.9	3.0
March, 1950	8.4	2.2	7.3	2.8	8.0	2.6
March, 1952	6.0	1.9	6.5	2.6	6.2	2.4
March, 1953	4.7	1.6	4.8	2.1	4.8	1.9
March, 1955	8.0	2.4	9.2	2.8	8.4	2.7
March, 1956	7.1	2.3	7.0	3.0	7.0	2.7
<u>Separations</u>						
March, 1949	8.5	1.4	7.1	2.8	8.0	2.3
March, 1950	8.7	1.6	7.5	2.4	8.3	2.1
March, 1952	7.0	1.9	6.9	2.6	7.0	2.4
March, 1953	4.2	1.6	4.2	2.7	4.2	2.3
March, 1955	7.5	2.0	8.4	2.9	7.8	2.6
March, 1956	6.8	2.2	7.6	3.0	7.1	2.7
FEMALES						
<u>Engagements</u>						
March, 1949	11.0	3.9	9.8	9.9	10.7	8.5
March, 1950	10.5	4.8	12.1	5.8	11.0	5.6
March, 1952	6.4	4.0	8.1	5.5	6.8	5.1
March, 1953	9.0	4.0	7.3	5.8	8.5	5.4
March, 1955	8.9	5.4	7.9	6.5	8.7	6.2
March, 1956	7.9	5.0	8.5	5.8	8.1	5.6
<u>Separations</u>						
March, 1949	8.9	3.4	9.4	8.2	9.0	7.1
March, 1950	8.6	4.4	11.0	5.7	9.3	5.3
March, 1952	9.7	4.2	9.9	5.8	9.7	5.4
March, 1953	6.1	3.2	4.9	4.6	5.9	4.3
March, 1955	8.9	5.0	7.0	5.6	8.5	5.5
March, 1956	9.1	3.9	7.4	5.4	8.7	5.0

(a) See introductory text for note on industrial coverage.

Table 2 shows separation rates for male and female manual workers in the main industry groups. These rates represent the turnover of the employees of all the individual businesses in the industry group, including employees moving from one business to another within the same industry group.

While the increase in March, 1955, over March, 1953 separation rates affected all industry groups, the subsequent overall fall in male rates and rise in female rates in March, 1956 did not occur in all industries. The fall in the male separation rates occurred in spite of slight increases in four industry groups - furniture, sawmilling and woodworking; paper and printing; building; and other non-manufacturing industries. The building industry male separation rate was the highest male rate in March, 1956 and was the highest March rate yet recorded for that industry. The overall rise in the female separation rates was due almost entirely to a sharp increase in the separation rate in the food, drink and tobacco industry where it increased from 16.1% in March, 1955 to 23.4% in March, 1956 - the highest rate for any industry group so far recorded. With the exception of paper and printing and wholesale trade all other industries showed a fall in female separation rates.

TABLE 2 - SEPARATION RATES FOR MANUAL WORKERS BY INDUSTRY, 1949 TO 1956
(Percentage of average number of employees)

Industry Group	March 1949	March 1950	March 1952	March 1953	March 1955	March 1956
MALES						
Manufacturing -						
Engineering, metal working and vehicle building	8.1	7.4	6.3	4.2	7.4	6.5
Textiles	9.1	9.2	9.1	2.5	7.1	5.8
Clothing	5.0	6.3	8.5	3.9	5.4	4.8
Food, drink, tobacco	10.2	13.0	8.8	6.3	10.0	9.7
Furniture, sawmilling and woodworking	11.6	9.9	7.0	3.5	6.1	6.2
Paper, printing	4.5	4.8	3.8	1.3	3.5	3.9
Other manufacturing	8.3	8.5	7.7	3.8	8.0	7.2
All manufacturing	8.5	8.7	7.0	4.2	7.5	6.8
Mining	3.4	4.1	2.7	1.9	3.8	3.8
Building	10.7	8.4	10.9	6.4	11.8	12.7
Road transport	6.7	7.4	4.1	4.1	9.0	6.2
Wholesale trade	5.6	8.1	5.4	4.7	9.4	7.6
Retail trade	5.1	5.6	4.8	2.7	6.0	3.2
All other (a)	9.8	10.5	9.5	3.8	7.8	9.3
All Industries (a)	8.0	8.3	7.0	4.2	7.8	7.1
FEMALES						
Manufacturing -						
Engineering, metal working and vehicle building	11.6	12.1	10.8	4.9	9.6	8.2
Textiles	9.1	7.1	9.0	3.8	7.0	5.9
Clothing	5.0	5.8	9.5	6.0	7.2	5.8
Food, drink and tobacco	21.7	13.7	9.2	10.4	16.1	23.4
Paper, printing	6.6	9.3	10.4	3.8	5.8	6.0
Other manufacturing	7.5	13.2	10.5	5.1	8.5	6.9
All Manufacturing	8.9	8.6	9.7	6.1	8.9	9.1
Wholesale trade	4.9	6.7	5.4	4.4	5.9	7.8
Retail trade	5.5	6.3	7.9	2.8	5.3	4.8
Other industries	11.4	13.5	12.1	6.6	8.2	7.9
All Industries (a)	9.0	9.3	9.7	5.9	8.5	8.7

(a) See introductory text for note on industrial coverage.

Separation Rates by Class of Separation

In Table 3 separations of manual workers have been classified by type of separation (dismissed, retrenched, left and other). Businesses submitting returns were asked to class employees as "dismissed" where employment was terminated on the employer's initiative for disciplinary or other reasons; as "retrenched" where the employment was terminated, permanently or otherwise, on the employer's initiative for reasons such as a reduction in the scale of operations, breakdown in machinery, shortage of materials, completion of the job etc.; as "left" where employment was terminated at the employee's initiative; and as "other" where the separation was due to death, injury, permanent retirement (including women leaving to be married) enlistment in the forces or other reasons.

Table 3 shows, for male and female manual workers, this analysis of separations in March, 1955 and March, 1956 in the main industry groups. Similar information for March, 1950, March, 1952 and March, 1953 may be obtained from the reports on Quarterly Business Surveys No. 20 and No. 24. Figures for September, 1954 and September, 1955 are shown in a report entitled "Labour Turnover in September, 1955", issued on 22nd March, 1956.

TABLE 3 : ANALYSIS OF SEPARATIONS FOR MANUAL WORKERS,

MARCH, 1955 AND MARCH, 1956

(Percentage of average employment in each group)

Industry Group	MARCH, 1955					MARCH, 1956				
	D.	R.	L.	O.	TOTAL	D.	R.	L.	O.	TOTAL
MALES										
Manufacturing -										
Engineering, vehicles, etc.	0.8	0.5	6.0	0.1	7.4	1.0	0.6	4.8	0.1	6.5
Textiles ..	0.7	0.3	5.9	0.2	7.1	0.5	0.1	5.1	0.1	5.8
Clothing ..	0.8	0.6	3.7	0.3	5.4	0.6	0.6	3.5	0.1	4.8
Food, Drink, Tobacco	1.0	3.2	5.7	0.1	10.0	1.1	3.6	4.7	0.3	9.7
Furniture, Woodworking	0.6	1.8	3.6	0.1	6.1	1.2	1.4	3.5	0.1	6.2
Paper, printing ..	0.7	0.0	2.7	0.1	3.5	0.4	0.1	3.2	0.2	3.9
Other manufacturing	0.9	0.1	6.9	0.1	8.0	1.2	0.6	5.2	0.2	7.2
All Manufacturing	0.8	1.0	5.6	0.1	7.5	1.0	1.0	4.6	0.2	6.8
Mining ..	0.4	0.0	3.3	0.1	3.8	0.2	0.3	3.0	0.2	3.7
Building ..	1.9	1.4	8.3	0.2	11.8	2.0	2.2	8.5	-	12.7
Road Transport ..	0.9	0.0	8.0	0.1	9.0	1.0	0.6	4.4	0.2	6.2
Wholesale and Retail Trade	1.1	0.9	6.4	0.1	8.5	1.2	1.5	3.4	0.1	6.2
Other Industries ..	1.9	0.3	5.5	0.1	7.8	2.0	1.0	6.0	0.3	9.3
All Industries	0.9	0.9	5.9	0.1	7.8	1.1	1.2	4.7	0.1	7.1
FEMALES										
Manufacturing -										
Engineering, vehicles, etc.	1.0	0.7	7.7	0.2	9.6	0.9	1.8	5.3	0.2	8.2
Textiles ..	0.6	1.0	5.2	0.2	7.0	0.4	0.6	4.7	0.2	5.9
Clothing ..	1.6	0.8	4.1	0.7	7.2	1.0	0.6	4.0	0.2	5.8
Food, Drink, Tobacco	0.7	7.1	8.1	0.2	16.1	1.1	12.1	9.9	0.3	23.4
Paper, printing ..	1.1	0.1	4.1	0.5	5.8	0.3	0.1	5.5	0.1	6.0
Other manufacturing	0.6	0.1	7.5	0.3	8.5	0.2	0.5	6.0	0.2	6.9
All manufacturing	1.1	1.7	5.7	0.4	8.9	0.8	2.6	5.5	0.2	9.1
Wholesale and Retail Trade	0.6	1.1	3.6	0.2	5.5	0.4	1.6	4.2	0.1	6.3
Other Industries ..	0.4	0.1	7.6	0.1	8.2	1.3	0.3	6.2	0.1	7.9
All Industries	0.9	1.4	5.8	0.4	8.5	0.8	2.1	5.6	0.2	8.7

(D. Dismissed; R. Retrenched; L. Left; O. Other Reasons).

As Table 3 indicates, the largest element in total separations of manual workers is the number of persons who left of their own initiative. Separations of this kind exceed the totals for all other causes in both periods in all industries except food, drink and tobacco manufacturing where, in March, 1956, for females in particular, retrenchments were exceptionally high.

For male manual workers, large decreases occurred in the percentages who "left" in the road transport and the wholesale and retail trade industry groups where the percentages fell from March, 1955 to March, 1956 by nearly half. The building industry and non-manufacturing businesses classified in the table as "other industries", were the only groups in which the percentages did not fall. The high rates of manual workers leaving and being retrenched in the building industry reflect the casual nature of employment in that industry.

For female manual workers there was no marked change in the overall rates for those who left or were dismissed, but there was an increase in retrenchments. This increase, and also the fact that the percentage who "left" had not decreased as it did for males, were largely due to sharply increased separation rates in the food, drink and tobacco industry where retrenchments increased from the high figure of 7.1% to 12.1% and "left" from 8.1% to 9.9%. These increases were most marked in the food canning industry and appear to be due to the greater extent of seasonal employment in that industry this year.

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8TH NOVEMBER, 1956